



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

County Counsel

At its meeting held June 1, 2004, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Knabe made the following statement:

“The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors demanding that a small cross displayed on the official County seal be removed and that a response from our Board be received within 14 days. The ACLU has threatened legal action against the County if the seal is not removed.

“The official County seal was designed by former Supervisor Kenneth Hahn and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 1, 1957. It has been a symbol of our great County which spans 4,081 square miles and encompasses 10 million residents, making it the largest and most diverse County in the nation.

“The seal has various symbols representing our County’s diverse and rich history from agriculture to oil production, from cultural activities to the conquest of space. And it includes a cross representing the influence of the California Missions which was part of the development of our County and the State of California.

“Our history cannot be changed and it will not be rewritten. We have a rich and proud history which every person in the County of Los Angeles can be proud, no matter what your religious background.

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“Today the County of Los Angeles faces a variety of critical issues and the threat of such a lawsuit by the ACLU is clearly a frivolous action and would cause the County of Los Angeles to spend an untold amount of already scarce resources.”

Therefore, Supervisor Knabe made a motion that the Board take the following actions:

1. Reiterate the Board's support for the County seal which was adopted 47 years ago; and
2. Instruct County Counsel to thoroughly review the matter in which the American Civil Liberties Union has threatened legal action against the County if the small cross displayed on the official seal is not removed, and begin preparations to protect and defend the County seal if such frivolous litigation is brought against the County.

The Honorable Janice Hahn, Los Angeles City Councilmember, 15th District, The Honorable Tom LaBonge, Los Angeles City Councilmember, 4th District, Lorraine Mabbett, Genevieve Clavreul, Kenneth J. Kleinberg, representing the Estate of Millard Sheets, and Michael S. Chacon addressed the Board.

After discussion, Supervisor Yaroslavsky made a substitute motion, seconded by Supervisor Burke, that the Board refer Supervisor Knabe's aforementioned motion to Closed Session to confer with legal counsel.

Supervisor Yaroslavsky's substitute motion was duly carried by the following vote: Ayes: Supervisors Molina, Burke and Yaroslavsky; Noes: Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe.

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Each Supervisor
Chief Administrative Officer